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Paschal-Michael Chigozie Ezie

April 18, 1954 ~ February 16, 2005

Paschal-Michael Chigozie Ezie was born to Chief Akudo Edmund O. Ezie and Ezinne Lolo Patricia on Easter Sunday, April 18, 1954 in Umuna, Orlu, Imo State, Nigeria. He was named Paschal after the Paschal Lamb of Easter, the day of his birth. He died suddenly and unexpectedly in Buffalo General Hospital on Wednesday, February 16, 2005.

Michael, as he was called by his family and friends, was baptized in Umuna, Orlu at eight days of age at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. He received his first communion and was confirmed at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. He completed his elementary education at Santa Maria School and his secondary education at Bishop Shanahan Secondary School in Orlu.

Michael came to the United States in 1971 and completed a Bachelor of Science in Business Education at Northern Kentucky University, followed by a Master of Business Administration at the University of Cincinnati in 1978. While working as an accountant there in 1979, he met Leslie Ellen Clapp, M.D., who would later become his wife of almost 22 years. Leslie and Michael were married on June 25, 1983 in Buffalo, New York. To their peaceful union were born three daughters, Andrea Chinyere, Lisa Kelechi, and Valerie Chisara, and one son, Claude-Michael Edmund Chiemeka.

Michael began his exemplary professional career in Cincinnati at the Cincinnati General Hospital as a Unit Coordinator, and then at Coopers and Lybrand as Staff Accountant and Auditor. Michael returned to Nigeria in 1981 to complete the mandatory civil service required of all Nigerian college graduates, the National Youth Corps. After completion of his services, he became the General Manager of his family's business in Nigeria. He returned to Buffalo and settled with his new family and continued his career as Fiscal Director, Comptroller, and then Chief Executive Officer of Geneva B. Scruggs Community Health Care Center, Inc. At the time of his death he was Corporate Director for Government Programs for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York.

Michael was the backbone in the organization and administration of his wife's pediatric practice from its inception as a solo medical practice of 300 patients in 1988 to its present status as Main Pediatrics, currently serving the health care needs of over 10,000 babies, children and adolescent patients.

His affiliations and achievements match the breadth and civic accomplishment of his professional career. Michael was the founding member of the Nigerian Association of Buffalo in 1989 and its first president. He has served as Co-Chair of the New York State AIDS Service Delivery Consortia, Co-Chair of the Health Systems Agency of WNY Infant Mortality Task Force, past chairperson of the Finance Committee of the Community Health Care Association of New York

State, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of Grace Manor Nursing Home and has been a member of the New York State Public Health Association, the American Health Care Association, the Health Care Reform Commission of Western New York, the Board of Directors of the Buffalo Community Health Plan, Leadership Buffalo - Class of 1990, the NAACP, the WBFO Radio Advisory Board, and the New York State Assembly Speaker's Health Care Advisory Board.

Among his awards and commendations are the Distinguished Service to New York State Award from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute, the Black Achievers in Industry Award, the Erie Community College Ebony and Ivory Award for Distinguished Achievement and Dedication, the National Medical Association Community Service Award, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Xi Epsilon Omega Chapter Health Service Award, and the Outstanding Executive Management and Administration Award-Agape AME Church.

Michael is survived by his wife and children, his mother Patricia, and his brothers and sisters Mrs. Fidelia Eze, M.Sc. (Dr. Emmanuel), Mrs. Justina Ogbuokiri, Ph.D. (Dr. Godwin), Mrs. Imelda Nwoga, Ph.D. (Dr. Jude), Joseph (Ife), Patrick (Theodora), and Mrs. Mary Jo Ekwem (Dr. Fred). He was preceded in death by his father Edmund, his brothers Benjamin and Simon, and his sister Gloria, and parents-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Claude D. Clapp. Leslie's sister Mrs. Karla Holloway, Ph.D. (Russell) and a host of nephews, nieces, cousins and friends also cherish his memory.

Michael is a member of St. Martin de Porres Roman Catholic Church where he served as chair of the finance committee and as a member of the Parish Council Finance and Development Committee. He was also selected to be an elder of the church. He also supported his home parish in Orlu, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church.

Michael will be remembered as a true gentleman, and a man of integrity and grace always ready to share a smile. His dedication to his family was unflinching. His children call him the "best father ever." He always put family first. Michael served, even unknowingly, as a role model to so many men who testify to aspiring to be the strong and devoted family man that he was. When asked to describe him, the words honest, decent, solid, fair, and dignified arise time and time again. So many sought his counsel because of his quiet strength of character and compassionate demeanor. His wife will always cherish her fervent cheerleader, who was always secure enough to feel proud of (and boast of) her accomplishments and to support her without limitations.

His family and loved ones will forever cherish the gift of his life, and his generous and perfect spirit.